



**AGENDA ITEM:** 4-J

**PREPARED BY:** Dylan Stone, Principal Regional Planner

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**SUBJECT:**

Letters of Support - Valley Rail Projects Grant Funding Applications

**Enclosure:** Yes

**Action:** Approve Letters of Support

**SUMMARY:**

The San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission (Rail Commission) and San Joaquin Joint Powers Authority have prepared or partnered in preparing funding applications for the following Valley Rail projects for the following grant programs:

**Consolidated Rail Infrastructure and Safety Improvements (CRISI) Program**

- The Rail Academy of Central California
- Valley Rail North – Sacramento Extension

**Nationally Significant Multimodal Freight & Highway Projects (INFRA) program**

- Ceres to Turlock Double Track

**National Infrastructure Project Assistance (MEGA) program**

- Madera High Speed Rail Station
- Valley Rail North - Sacramento Extension

**Port Infrastructure Development Program (PIDP)**

- Stockton Diamond Project as part of the “Rail Infrastructure Improvements for Sustainable Exports Project” with Port of Stockton

MCTC staff have reviewed the projects and programs and support these projects being awarded in their respective funding requests. Details about these projects are summarized below and available in the attached letters of support.

**The Rail Academy of Central California (TRACC)**

TRACC operates as a strategic partnership between educational and business entities to train and place students into quality transportation-related jobs in railroad and transit sectors.

Primarily, TRACC draws from San Joaquin County-area high school students from populations with labor market barriers due to geography and socio-economic status. TRACC will also accept trainees over 18 years of age participating in the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF), and the Women, Infants and Children (WIC), and veterans and military spouses. Sacramento City College (SAC City) will oversee the educational aspects of TRACC, provide the approved curriculum and two instructors.

### **Valley Rail North – Sacramento Extension**

The purpose of the Valley Rail North – Sacramento Extension Project is to implement various improvements on Valley Rail North Corridor (extension to Natomas). The network of projects includes construction of new stations, siding upgrades, track extensions, yard rehabilitation, etc. When the Project is completed, it will implement new and increased San Joaquin passenger and ACE rail service with five new stations between Stockton and Sacramento. The Project will meet regional goals to improve passenger rail ridership and connectivity. The Project will construct infrastructure improvements that will improve safety, support economic vitality, create good-paying jobs, increase capacity and supply chain resilience, apply innovative technology, and address climate change, gender equity and racial equity.

### **Ceres to Turlock Double Track**

The Ceres to Turlock Double Track Project will construct a new, second mainline track and complete track upgrades on a portion of the Union Pacific Railroad (UPRR) Fresno Subdivision between milepost (MP) 117.4 (in Ceres) and MP 128.2 (in Turlock), including culvert, under crossing, and at-grade crossing improvements. The Project will construct freight rail improvements that will increase safety, modernize core infrastructure, improve system operations and reliability, reduce transportation-related pollution, and benefit a federally designated Area of Persistent Poverty, Historically Disadvantaged Community, and Opportunity Zone, as well as a state designated Disadvantaged Community, Economically Distressed Area, and Low-Income Community. The Project is a critical part of the “Valley Rail” passenger rail expansion program that will enable Altamont Corridor Express (ACE) service to operate between Ceres and Turlock, substantially increasing the project benefits.

### **Madera High Speed Rail Station**

The purpose of the Madera High Speed Rail Station Project is to implement improvements at the relocated Madera passenger rail station so that this station becomes the Madera High-Speed Rail (HSR) Station to serve Madera County and Northern Fresno County as part of the California HSR Merced-Bakersfield Early Operating Segment (EOS). When HSR operations begin on the EOS (2030 – 2033), the Project will meet regional goals to improve passenger rail ridership and connectivity. The Project will construct infrastructure improvements that will increase safety, ensure a state of good repair, contribute economic benefits, improve

freight movement, create well-paying jobs, mitigate climate change, bolster resiliency, ensure equity, provide multimodal options, and improve quality of life.

**Stockton Diamond Project as part of the “Rail Infrastructure Improvements for Sustainable Exports Project” with Port of Stockton**

The Port of Stockton (Port) has prepared an application for the Rail Infrastructure Improvements for Sustainable Exports Project (RIISE). The components of the RIISE project include the San Joaquin Rail Bridge replacement, Long Lead Double Track, New West Complex McCloy Yard, and the Stockton Diamond Grade Separation. These initiatives are key to modernizing freight rail infrastructure, boosting the economy, and enhancing sustainability.

Anticipating a notable increase in rail volumes through its East and West Complexes in the coming years, the Port is preparing to accommodate longer and more frequent trains. These will predominantly be single commodity unit trains, transporting bulk materials for global export. Such growth necessitates substantial investment in the Port and its surrounding infrastructure to sustain its contribution to the regional, national, and global economy.

The RIISE project aims to upgrade rail infrastructure, increasing efficiency, reducing congestion, and lowering emissions. A key focus is the resolution of the Stockton Diamond bottleneck, California's most congested rail corridor, improving capacity and operational flexibility at the Port. Together, these components will significantly enhance the Port's capacity and efficiency, ensuring it remains a leading net export facility and mitigating the need for cargo redirection to other ports, thereby saving costs and reducing emissions.

**FISCAL IMPACT:**

No fiscal impact to the approved 2023-24 Overall Work Program and Budget.